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STATE OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

THE APPLICATION OF DTE ELECTRIC COMPANY
FOR AUTHORITY TO INCREASE ITS RATES,
AMEND ITS RATE SCHEDULES AND RULES
GOVERNING THE DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLY
OF ELECTRIC ENERGY, AND FOR
MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNTING AUTHORITY:

Case No. U-21534.

PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE LESLEY CARR FAIRROW

17525 Wyoming Avenue, Detroit, Michigan

Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

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APPEARANCES :

MPSC MEMBERS PRESENT: Dan Scripps
 Alessandra Carreon
 Katherine Peretick

ALSO PRESENT: Shatina Jones, MPSC

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1 Detroit, Michigan

2 Thursday, March 9, 2023 - 1:32 p.m.

3 JUDGE FAIRROW: Welcome to this public hearing
4 of the Michigan Public Service Commission. Today is
5 September 18th, 2024. This hearing is in Case No.
6 U-21534, in the matter of the application of DTE
7 Electric Company for authority to increase its rates,
8 amend its rate schedules and rules governing the
9 distribution and supply of electric energy, and for
10 miscellaneous accounting authority.

11 This public hearing is being held in accordance
12 with the Notice of Hearing that was issued in the case.

13 My name is Lesley Fairrow. I'm an an
14 Administrative Law Judge with the Michigan Office of
15 Administrative Hearings and Rules. I will be helping
16 the Commission take public comment this evening. And
17 there are a few housekeeping matters that I want to
18 address. First I would ask that everyone take the time
19 to mute or silence your -- any electronic device you
20 have, take note of the exits in the room, and the
21 microphones that are down at the front of the stage --
22 or near the front of the state.

23 This public hearing is being held at Mumford
24 High School in Detroit. A transcript of the public
25 hearing will be filed in the docket for Case No.

1 U-21534. With me tonight are the three members of the
2 Michigan Public Service Commission, Chair Dan Scripps,
3 Commissioner Alessandra Carreon, and Commissioner
4 Katherine Peretick.

5 Commissioners, I will now turn it you to make
6 opening remarks.

7 MR. SCRIPPS: Thank you, Judge Fairrow.

8 And thank all of you for being here with us
9 tonight. I want to make sure that I thank the -- and
10 the folks who are taking time out of their busy
11 schedules to join us here in northwest Detroit. And a
12 special thank you to the groups that were involved in
13 organizing and helping to get the word out about this
14 public hearing.

15 I also want to take a moment to recognize the
16 elected officials joining us tonight. I know that
17 Detroit City Member Mary Waters is here. Council Member
18 Waters, if you want to -- thank you for being here.

19 And also, Jeff Bohm, the chair of the St. Clair
20 County Board of Commissioners. And Chairman Balm --
21 Bohm, if you're in -- as well. Okay. I see him -- see
22 him in the back.

23 And then if there is any other elected
24 officials who are here, just a chance to maybe stand and
25 wave, and I want to make sure that you're recognized, as

1 well. Okay.

2 Because the purpose of this hearing is really
3 to listen to all of you, and because we already have a
4 large number of comment cards, we're not going to do a
5 presentation or anything else. We're simply here to
6 listen to what you have to say, and we're excited to
7 hear from you.

8 The comments made tonight are being transcribed
9 by our court reporter and will be included in the
10 transcript that Judge Fairrow mentioned, will be posted
11 publicly in the case docket. I want to thank our court
12 reporter in advance for being here. I'm going to try to
13 speak slowly to make our court reporter's job a little
14 easier and would encourage you all to do the same as you
15 make your comments so that she can accurately record
16 them.

17 Comments in a contested case, such as this,
18 again, are posted to the record and reviewed by the
19 Commission, the three of us. However, I want to note
20 that there is a difference between comments and the
21 evidence that's provided by expert witnesses in the
22 case. Those folks provide testimony that can be
23 challenged during cross-examination. And because
24 comments are not subject to the same level of scrutiny
25 and proof, they're not evidence on which we, as the

1 Commission, can base a decision under law. But again,
2 we do review the comments.

3 And, again, I would say that over the last
4 several years, and to point out, we have benefitted from
5 increased participation from those representing the
6 interests of residential customers, in our formal
7 proceedings, including a number of groups representing
8 front-line organizations here in Detroit.

9 In 2016, for example, there were 31 parties to
10 the DTE electric rate case. In last year's case there
11 69 parties, more than double. We also saw a more than
12 doubling of expert witnesses and pages in the
13 transcript, and growth in topics that reflect the
14 diversity and increased diversity of the groups
15 participating in our cases. These groups are formal
16 litigants in our cases, and just like the utility, or
17 professional staff, the Attorney General, and others,
18 the evidence they present can be and is carefully
19 reviewed during the case.

20 In addition, the energy reforms passed by the
21 Legislature and signed into law by Governor Whitmer at
22 the end of last year significantly increased the funding
23 available to non-profit organizations to intervene on
24 behalf of residential customers in Commission
25 proceedings, expanded the range of cases for which this

1 funding could be used, and explicitly encouraged grant
2 making to non-profit organizations representing
3 environmental justice communities and communities with
4 the highest energy burdens. Grants from this fund are
5 made by the Utility Consumer Participation Board, which
6 is separate from the Michigan Public Service Commission.

7 So one way to make sure that your perspectives
8 are included in the evidentiary record is to work with
9 those non-profit organizations who receive this funding
10 to represent the interests of residential customers, and
11 again, with an increased focus on environmental justice
12 communities and communities with the highest energy
13 burdens.

14 One more note before I close, because this is a
15 contested case, Commissioners are subject to ex parte
16 rules. And this is really important. These rules mean
17 that we can't talk back to you or engage in conversation
18 in the case.

19 In fact, we're prohibited by law from talking
20 about any contested case that's in front of us. So if
21 you have specific questions, I would encourage you to
22 talk with one of our MPSC Staffers here tonight, and
23 they will be able to help or will take down your
24 information and have someone get back to you. They can
25 also share additional details around the process of the

1 case.

2 Finally, speaking of our staff, we have a
3 number of them here tonight, including members of our
4 customer assistance team. And so if you have questions
5 about your utility service or need bill payment
6 assistance, please stop by the customer assistance table
7 outside the room tonight and our staff will be more than
8 happy to try to help you with that.

9 Again, thank you for being here tonight. I'm
10 going to invite my colleagues to say hello and offer any
11 initial comments they might, and then we're excited to
12 hear from you?

13 Ms. Peretick?

14 MS. PERETICK: Thank you, Chair Scripps.

15 My name is Katherine Peretick, and I'm one of
16 the other three of the Commissioners on the Public
17 Service Commission. And I just wanted to extend my
18 thanks to all of you here tonight. I really believe
19 it's important for us to hear from you, and I'm very
20 thankful for all of you for taking time out of your
21 evening to be here.

22 I know it is unusual for Public Service
23 Commissions to hold public hearings like this. And as
24 the Chair mentioned, we must do our work in a very
25 structured way that follows the laws that govern us.

1 But this Commission, the three of us here, we think it's
2 incredibly valuable to hear from the people who are
3 directly affected by the decisions that we make. And
4 that is why we are here tonight.

5 Separately, we're going through a process to
6 identify improvements for our public engagement process.
7 We held a public hearing on this in Flint on August 28th
8 and got some great ideas on how to better take public
9 input, expand accessibility and participation, and also
10 enhance transparency of our proceedings for however we
11 can within the law. And then explain in plain language
12 in accessible ways the work -- the work that we do and
13 the effects that it has on the people of Michigan. This
14 comment period is still open, and if you have additional
15 ideas for us, we would really love to hear them.

16 You can submit comments to docket U-21638 on
17 the MPSC's website, or you can use a comment card that's
18 available at either of the side tables here. The white
19 comment cards are where you can -- you can write down
20 your comments and then leave them in those boxes. Or
21 you can use the QR code on the cards that were being
22 passed out as you were entering. If you use the QR code
23 that's on the bottom here, you can add your comments to
24 the comment docket of other cases that are before us,
25 that focus on public participation and also improving

1 the rate case process.

2 But we genuinely would like to hear your ideas
3 on how we can make both of these processes better. As
4 appointed commissioners it's our job to serve you. And
5 I also just want to briefly draw your attention to a
6 couple of resources that we have available tonight. At
7 the registration table where you signed in there are
8 copies of our Rate Case 101, which is a great resource
9 to get an initial understanding of the rate case
10 process. And then the second is a "How to make a
11 comment" postcard. So in addition to making comments
12 here tonight, and in addition to using these QR code,
13 there are several other ways that you can comment in our
14 cases.

15 For anyone who doesn't want to make a verbal
16 comment tonight, we have those written -- the white
17 written comment cards that I mentioned available on
18 either of the side tables, and you can leave them in
19 those deposit boxes. You can also make comments during
20 the public comment portion of our regular Commission
21 meetings, we held every two to three weeks, and those
22 can be attended in person at our offices in Lansing, and
23 every one of them is also available to attend virtually
24 through our Microsoft Teams meeting link. And every one
25 of those meetings has an opportunity for public comment

1 at the end.

2 You can also submit written comments to the
3 Commission anytime via regular mail, via e-mail, or
4 using the "comment" feature on our MPSC web page for the
5 specific case that you would like to comment on. And
6 you can find many more of these details on the postcard
7 that I just mentioned, or talk to any one of our staff
8 members that's here tonight. They are all personally
9 knowledgeable about this.

10 So thank you so much for being here, and I'm
11 really looking forward to hearing your thoughts,
12 opinions, and recommendations for us.

13 MS. CARREON: Thank you, Commissioner Peretick.

14 Good evening, everyone. I'm going to try to
15 keep my remarks brief, because our priority tonight, and
16 the purpose we're here, is to hear from you? It's a
17 true pleasure to be with you all here in the city I call
18 home, Detroit.

19 I want to add my thanks to that of my
20 colleagues, for you all, for coming out tonight. I know
21 it's difficult, it can be difficult to make time in a
22 busy schedule to participate in an event like this. And
23 you know it's important, and I'm grateful you're here.

24 As commissioners, we believe that
25 understanding, engaging with, and connecting to

1 community is essential to our work, and foundational to
2 those efforts is understanding how best we can reach
3 folks. So to help us as we continue to expand our
4 efforts in these areas, we're seeking feedback from the
5 public, from you, and Commissioner Peretick already went
6 through a few ways that you can do that.

7 So just to kind of reiterate and really
8 emphasize how important these two particular proceedings
9 are, besides the comments that we'll have the privilege
10 of hearing from you tonight, and how our work impacts
11 your day-to-day lives, I want to make sure that you do
12 pay close attention to these two QR codes. They link to
13 two different comment dockets. There are uncontested,
14 which means that we can talk about these kinds of cases.
15 And the first docket is an opportunity to comment on how
16 to improve the rate case process.

17 And the second QR code is for a docket on
18 opportunities to expand public participation in our
19 proceedings, as Commissioner mentioned. So if you have
20 thoughts that you would like to share with us on either
21 of these issues, I encourage you to submit comments, and
22 you can use the cards provided tonight to go to
23 whichever dockets you would like to comment on. Click
24 "comment" to leave your comment. And then of course you
25 can follow any of the other instructions Commissioner

1 Peretick described, and we are accepting comments this
2 month on both dockets. And then on the back side of the
3 same card is a third QR code, also very important. It
4 will take you to a survey that will help us understand
5 how we can reach all Michiganders better. And that
6 survey is only open tonight until 10:00 p.m.

7 We're hoping that you'll take just a couple of
8 minutes to share with us things like how you heard about
9 tonight's hearing and any other input you would like to
10 have for us. I also want to acknowledge, and Chair
11 Scripps did this too, the many organizations who not
12 only dedicate their time and expertise to get involved
13 in our proceedings, but also those who invite the MPSC
14 to community events and resource fairs to engage in
15 partnerships that help establish an ongoing exchange of
16 information to keep the public aware of what we're
17 going.

18 There are so many community based organizations
19 across our state who work tirelessly to build capacity
20 and understanding how the work at the Commission affects
21 all community members. And so I just want to point out
22 that we have a wonderful team of community liaisons and
23 staff at the MPSC who are constantly engaging, working,
24 listening, to make these connections and stay in touch
25 with Michiganders.

1 And for anyone interested in jobs at the MPSC,
2 we also happen to be hiring. So please check our
3 website for information. You can visit the resource
4 table for a link to opportunities.

5 And I want to end on this note, I want to take
6 a moment to recognize the children who are here with
7 their parents, grandparents, guardians, or other adults
8 who are taking care of them. I see you. We're so
9 thrilled you're here. We applaud you for getting active
10 in issues that are of critical importance to all of us.
11 Keep up the great work, and for when you're not
12 providing your comments, we do have coloring packets and
13 crayons, if that's of interest, at the registration
14 table. So if you didn't get one, check in and make sure
15 you (inaudible) meeting tonight to take home.

16 And with that, I'll hand it over to Judge
17 Fairrow.

18 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you, Commissioners.

19 Before we start the public comment period, I do
20 want to ask that everyone be mindful of the time limit.
21 You will be able to make comments for a maximum of two
22 minutes this evening. We want to try to get to as many
23 people as possible, so I ask that you strictly adhere to
24 that two minutes. We do have Staff Member Shatina Jones
25 keeping time this evening. So she will hold up a yellow

1 card when you have 30 seconds remaining on your time,
2 and a red card when your time is up. As I said, we want
3 to try to get to as many people as possible, so that's
4 why we need to stick to that time period.

5 And you heard from the Commissioners other ways
6 to make comments written and submit them to the
7 Commission so that they can review them. Also, please
8 be mindful that any comments that you do submit, whether
9 they're verbal or in writing, will be a part of the
10 public docket, so please do not include any information
11 that you would like to keep private.

12 When I call your name, please come up to one of
13 the microphones down front. If for any reason, you feel
14 you need to stay seated, please put your hand up and a
15 staff member will bring the microphone to you. As the
16 Chair mentioned, please speak slowly and into the
17 microphone so that our Court Reporter will get all of
18 your comments accurately transcribed. And to cut down
19 on the time between speakers, I'll be calling three
20 names at a time so you'll know when you're coming up to
21 be -- to make your comment.

22 Okay. So our first speaker asked for
23 accommodations in advanced, Ms. Karen Greenwald. Ms.
24 Greenwald, go ahead with your comment. It looks like
25 we're having a little technical difficulty, so I'm going

1 to call the next speakers up so that we can move along
2 and not waste time. And I'll get Ms. Greenwald when
3 they make it available.

4 So Eric Hunt, Carlton Orse, and Council Member
5 Mary Waters. Mr. Hunt?

6 MR. HUNT: Good afternoon. I want to know why,
7 legitimately why you're doing this. Is there any reason
8 which you aren't speaking about to everybody?

9 JUDGE FAIRROW: As the Chair mentioned, we will
10 not -- the Commissioners nor I will be able to answer
11 any questions. You can make your comments, and they
12 will take them into consideration.

13 MR. HUNT: I suspect that if we change the
14 electricity and gas, and put it all on one bill, you had
15 a planned way of doing this. It's not fair. I live in
16 a house by myself. My bill is constantly going up,
17 constantly. I'm not burning no new electricity, no
18 nothing, but my -- this month I paid \$600 and some
19 dollars; this month. I would like to know why? And if
20 you can't tell me why, why can't you take some of that
21 money and put it into our roofs.

22 We can deal with solar. I would be happy to
23 give you the money if you give me some solar panels.

24 JUDGE FAIRROW: Mr. Orse?

25 MR. ORSE: Good afternoon. My name is Carlton

1 Orse, with a PSC, and "PSC" does not stand for Public
2 Service Commission. It stands for Paradigm Shift
3 Consulting, and putting me back in our neighborhood.
4 I'm taking (inaudible) of -- I know we're here for rate
5 increase discussion. I believe a rate increase is a
6 business impairment for this community. Mainly because
7 should (inaudible) and the state of Michigan and the
8 whole country has to go to what's called a "smart grid."
9 That's going to be over \$9-billion capital improvement
10 project by DTE. It's not an option.

11 If we look at whole -- the island of Bali and
12 Hawaii last year, half the island almost got wiped out,
13 over \$5-billion in costs and construction because they
14 didn't have smart grid technology. If they had that,
15 probably would have only be a fraction, because they
16 could isolate and cut down power lines, turn off power
17 lines, and the whole problem would have been resolved,
18 probably no more than \$2-million. But they did not know
19 what they were doing, so you're flying blindly. So
20 going to the smart grid is a requirement.

21 It's become a greater requirement very recent,
22 because many of you hear the term "AI," artificial
23 intelligence. Artificial intelligence has put a
24 tremendous burden on the electrical grid as we know it.
25 He's not my favorite guy, but Elon Musk indicated right

1 now we'll be running out of electricity perhaps by this
2 year. I think that's overly ambitious as far as what
3 he's expecting. But in the next few years, we won't be
4 able to do it. So we have to invest now. Pay now or
5 pay later, and later is going to be much more costly.
6 But --

7 (Off the record interruption)

8 JUDGE FAIRROW: Excuse me; excuse me. Please
9 do not call out.

10 MS. ORSE: Hey; hey, listen. I don't like my
11 bill either, you know, but the girl's blinking on me at
12 that TV going there, and it keeps going up. But -- hey,
13 I don't want to pay more. I'm no different than anyone
14 else. But I know we don't pay now, we won't have
15 electricity. It won't be available. And many -- many
16 of you --

17 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
18 Orse; thank you.

19 (Off the record interruption).

20 JUDGE FAIRROW: I'm going to ask you to refrain
21 from yelling out. It will take up time. I won't be
22 able to get to as many people as we can. So please
23 don't yell out. Please don't call out. If you want to
24 make a comment, fill out a card and we'll call you up.

25 Council Member Waters?

1 MS. WATERS: It sure is alive and well.

2 (Inaudible) --

3 (Off the record interruption)

4 MS. WATERS: Can you guys hear me now?

5 JUDGE FAIRROW: Yes.

6 MS. WATERS: All right. So I wanted to stop by
7 today, because people in the City of Detroit need help.
8 These -- their bills, they call the office all the time,
9 saying, "I need help with my DTE bill. I don't where to
10 turn." I don't know how to get them the help that they
11 need so that they are not in the dark. Sometimes they
12 have to chose between paying for food, or their
13 medication, and this high DTE bill. And I know theirs
14 is high, because mine is. I can't afford it either.

15 But here is my statement, because of the -- due
16 to the essence of time: The Michigan Public Service
17 Commission should reject outright DTE's request for a
18 \$450-million rate increase. Forbes has revealed DTE
19 profits for 2023 were 6.48 billion, a 6.91 increases
20 from 2022. DTE Energy annual growth sponsors for 2022
21 were 6.68 billion, and 5.42 percent increase from 2021.
22 The Michigan Public Service Commission must quit playing
23 us, and institutionally behavior as public servants, not
24 a rubber stamp for greedy energy profiteers.

25 (Inaudible) -- barely three months ago DTE got

1 a huge rate increase. We need DTE to implement
2 affordability rates with no shut offs for those living
3 in poverty or the working poor. There would should also
4 be profit sharing between DTE and it's customers, which
5 make for rebate checks to DTE customers based upon DTE
6 profits. Energy for life necessities must be viewed as
7 a human akin to water. That's my statement. These are
8 human (inaudible) --

9 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

10 MS. WATERS: -- (inaudible) their rates
11 increases until these stated issues, affordability and
12 no shut offs, are incorporated into rate increase
13 agreements. Can you do that? Thank you.

14 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Now, I understand
15 that Ms. Greenwald is now available, and while she is
16 about to make her comment, I want Ronald Lockett, Khary
17 Frazier, and Dr. E'Lois Thomas to come up to the
18 microphone. Ms. Greenwald?

19 (Off the record interruption).

20 MS. GREENWALD: Hello. Can you hear me?

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Go ahead, Ms. Greenwald.

22 MS. GREENWALD: Thank you for allowing me to
23 attend this meeting online. And one of -- one of the
24 things I wanted to mention to the MPSC, and this is very
25 important, we have a big disparage divide between people

1 with disabilities, senior adults, low income, who can't
2 get somebody on the phone at DTE to help them with their
3 issues.

4 The other thing that's really important is half
5 of the people, half of southeast Michigan has been cut
6 off from this meeting because it is not live streamed so
7 we can participate equally. And that -- in the
8 beginning of the meeting, you-all asked, "How can we do
9 better?" Well, we live in an age where live -- with
10 virtual meetings is a fact of life. We did it during
11 the pandemic, and then for people with disabilities, and
12 according to our Attorney General Dana Nessel, she said,
13 "We must provide equal access to public meetings";
14 period. It's a law. It's the Americans with
15 Disabilities Act, and it's also Section 504, et cetera;
16 et cetera.

17 So my concern is this: Neither the MPSC
18 follows the federal law nor DTE. DTE needs to have a
19 disability office for people with disabilities who can't
20 get through, whatever their issue, they can call. And,
21 again, that's also part of public accommodation, and
22 that's part of the law. So I just want -- I just need
23 to make that out there, because I'm in everybody's
24 court. I help the seniors in my area to get through to
25 somebody at DTE. It shouldn't be that hard.

1 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Ronald Lockett, and
2 after him, Khary Frazier, Dr. E'Lois Thomas. Mr.
3 Lockett?

4 MR. LOCKETT: Yes. Good evening. I'm the
5 president of the Detroit Association of Black
6 Organizations, and we deal with community members,
7 citizens, every day. DTE has been extremely helpful and
8 supportive with us, and we need to -- our community
9 members, during -- during heat waves we've had flatbeds
10 of water distributed throughout the community.

11 (Off the record interruption).

12 MR. LOCKETT: We -- we have boxes of energy
13 efficient light bulbs distributed throughout our
14 community. We have -- we have a really robust DTE
15 senior appliance program, whereas furnaces, washers,
16 dryers are -- are replaced. You know, we have citizens
17 to get a chance at getting replaced, seniors
18 predominately. Our seniors have really been taken care
19 of significantly, and we work diligently with DTE, with
20 their shut-off protection programs to keep citizens
21 receiving energy, which is very critical.

22 I'm also a citizen and a resident over on the
23 east side where the BCA, Business Community Association,
24 where a new grid has been put up over on the east side,
25 on the Islandview substation. And I advise everyone to

1 see what we've done with 15,000 square feet of surface
2 space where artists throughout the community have put up
3 a beautiful work of art that is throughout the
4 (inaudible).

5 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Mr. Frazier.

6 MR. LOCKETT: Thank you.

7 MR. FRAZIER: Safe, reliable, accessible
8 energy; that's the task of your Commission. And here
9 throughout southeast Michigan, Detroit -- Highland Park
10 especially -- it can't be with the rates of DTE, and
11 what's happening through DTE rates. So one could say
12 that it's only going to be a couple of cents up, but
13 when those cents already don't exist, you're putting
14 strains in families and household services, to people
15 such as myself and many others who have choices are
16 being made between food, between already what else is
17 skyrocketing, between the property taxes, and already
18 what has happened.

19 And also, thinking about the soaring profits
20 for this organization, a corporation that has made
21 profits before COVID, during COVID, after COVID, now.
22 One of the biggest corporations throughout southeast
23 Michigan, and we don't even have a choice. That's why I
24 had to stand in solidarity. Solidarity stands with the
25 governments of Highland Park and Detroit.

1 And (inaudible) to stop and halt not just this
2 rate increase, but the one that they're be asking for in
3 a couple weeks, the one that they'll be asking for in
4 six months, and the one that they'll be asking for in
5 six months from then, and in six months from there.
6 They have enough profit to put into their business. And
7 it's kind of not a business, because we don't have
8 choice.

9 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Dr. Thomas? And
10 after Dr. Thomas, State Representative Kimberly Edwards,
11 and then David Felton.

12 DR. THOMAS: Good evening, everyone. As
13 stated, I am Dr. Thomas. I'm the president of SEEL,
14 Solutions for Energy Sufficient Logistics. I'm here to
15 talk about some great work we're doing in the community
16 in partnership with DTE. So DTE is committed to --

17 (Off the record interruption)

18 JUDGE FAIRROW: Please control yourself and not
19 talk when others when are talking, please, so that we
20 can get as many people's comments in.

21 DR. THOMAS: Thank you. Like the gentleman
22 from DABO spoke to, there are a lot of senior programs,
23 a lot of wrap-around services, a lot of community
24 services. And I can speak from our organization, that
25 we provide these services in the community.

1 We work with over 43 non-profits in the
2 metropolitan Detroit area and in the DTE electric
3 service territory, where we're able to provide help.
4 And I would like to encourage those that have high bills
5 to really reach out to DTE, and ask those questions, and
6 advocate, because we run five programs that provide
7 support in the community. We have senior programs. We
8 have recycling programs, and other programs, so maybe
9 you just don't know that they're available. But they
10 are, so please reach out for support, and thank you.

11 (Off the record interruption).

12 JUDGE FAIRROW: State Representative Kimberly
13 Edwards, David Felton, and Horace Sheffield.

14 MR. FELTON: Good evening. My name is David
15 Felton. I just want to talk about DTE and a much needed
16 electric grid. It makes it more reli- -- resilient in
17 reducing the outages, it's crucial outages under
18 (inaudible) weather that eventually comes more and more
19 frequent.

20 (Off the record interruption).

21 MR. FELTON: No. I looked it up myself, but
22 thank you. Okay. Economic development: Upgrading the
23 grid will support clean energy and could create new jobs
24 in renewable energy, construction and grid maintenance.
25 This can stimulate mobile economies to solve these

1 issues in Michigan. DTE does support and hire a lot of
2 Detroiters, a lot of people that live in this area. I
3 do support what they're doing. Again, they can do
4 better.

5 (Off the record interruption).

6 MR. FELTON: What I'm going to do is I'm going
7 to keep talking. I need you to shut up.

8 JUDGE FAIRROW: Please just direct your
9 comments to the Commission.

10 (Off the record interruption).

11 MR. FELTON: So, again, this is about being
12 self-controlled and having the opportunity to
13 (inaudible) influence and impacting the community.
14 Thank you very much.

15 JUDGE FAIRROW: State Representative Edwards,
16 Horace Sheffield.

17 MS. EDWARDS: Well, clearly, I am State
18 Representative Kimberly Edwards. I represent House
19 District 12. It covers part of the inside of Detroit.
20 And I believe that (inaudible) that said we should not
21 have to decide between energy or food. It's just too
22 much. But I will yield my time to my colleague, Rep.
23 Churches.

24 Jamie? Is it going to affect --

25 MS. JONES: It's the same amount of time.

1 MS. EDWARDS: All right.

2 MS. CHURCHES: My name is Jamie Churches. I
3 represent House District 27, Downriver. I'm here to
4 lift up the voices of Downriver. I -- I've gotten a lot
5 of constituent calls with unreliable utility service.
6 Today, outdoors, I even spoke to a woman, and her
7 biggest issue was the price of utilities. I'm here to
8 lift up the voices of the community in which I
9 represent, and urge that MPSC to not take a rate
10 increase, and find alternative ways to do this.

11 I know that political giving is a part of what
12 DTE engages in, so if it could limit political giving,
13 if it could find other (inaudible) instead of first
14 increasing rates for our constituents once again. So,
15 again, I would like to highly encourage the hesitation
16 of yet another rate increase.

17 JUDGE FAIRROW: Horace Sheffield, Reggie
18 Walker, and Juanita Ray. Mr. Sheffield?

19 MR. SHEFFIELD: First of all, let me thank you
20 for coming to Detroit. I've been to many hearings, and
21 I'm glad to have you hear. First of all, I have many
22 concerns about DTE, as well. But I want to speak that
23 I'm in favor of this rate increase to redo the
24 infrastructure.

25 I've had service delivery issues, and I did a

1 lot of things with the exception of additional cost, I
2 address this: Clean energy, efficiency, reliability,
3 all the things that we're concerned about I think really
4 are addressed with this rate increase. I've heard a lot
5 of things said about what's going to happen with the
6 money; it's not true. All of this money goes to
7 infrastructure. In fact, today I was at my office --

8 (Off the record interruption)

9 MR. SHEFFIELD: Yeah, I love people who cover
10 free speech, especially when it's theirs. I didn't say
11 anything (inaudible), so, please. And that's democracy.
12 That's what we don't have right now, by the way. So
13 many people in this room, I love and respect, I just
14 have a different opinion, and I believe in -- DTE's a
15 Detroit-based company that hire significant numbers of
16 African Americans, they invest in Black businesses, and
17 we need to improve our grid so the reliability
18 increases. And a lot of the complaints we have about
19 the lack of service and interrupting can be addressed.
20 So, again, I support the rate increase 100 percent.

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Reggie Walker, and then Juanita
22 Ray.

23 MR. WALKER: Thank you very much. I don't
24 think there is anyone here who likes to be asked that
25 they have a rate increase. Each one of us, through our

1 day to day, we work our asses off. We try to put food
2 on the plate for our families. There is a "however."
3 We take electricity, we take power -- we take it for
4 granted. We're facing a time now, however, where the
5 current grid cannot support what we are doing.

6 We have an infrastructure which is over 100
7 years old in many neighborhoods. And those
8 neighborhoods that support -- excuse me -- that
9 primarily have people who are black and brown color --
10 those are typically the areas for which needs the
11 greatest improvement. Now, as some of you are saying
12 "yay," there is one way to improve this particular
13 scenario, and it's binary. We're here to become
14 reactive -- all right? -- or proactive. You're
15 proactive when you're looking for solutions. You're
16 reactive when you're floating on water. DTE doesn't
17 want to float on water. What they want to do is they
18 want to provide service to each one of you, reliable
19 services to each one of you. And for that, I have no
20 choice but to support it. I don't want to pay a rate
21 increase. But what I do believe is that at the end of
22 the day, all of us are going to be better for it.

23 JUDGE FAIRROW: And next is Ms. Ray. And while
24 she's making her comments, if Horatio Williams and Anna
25 Harris would come up.

1 MS. RAY: Good evening. My name is Juanita
2 Ray. I am the president of Local 223 Utility Workers
3 Union of America. I represent almost 4,000 members and
4 maintain and operate the electrical, gas, wind turbine,
5 and nuclear security. My members live in every
6 community from the Upper Peninsula to the Michigan-Ohio
7 border and everything in between. Our members are
8 invested in active because they too are customers.
9 These men and women work 24/7, 365 days a year.

10 When things are at their worst, we are at our
11 best. I'm here to talk about our aging infrastructure,
12 the increase in climate change, and why it's important
13 to support DTE's plan to invest \$9-billion into the
14 infrastructure over the next five years, which will
15 increase reliability. In the last few years, we have
16 experienced full-on outages due to major storms that can
17 be reduced with updates to the electrical system. New
18 technology such as Viper switches, as an example, can
19 isolate the impacted part of the circuit, limiting
20 outages and unnecessary outages.

21 Also, battery storage systems that can provide
22 increased reliability during high peak times by adding
23 needed megawatts to the grid. DTE will be
24 decommissioning coal fired power plants and investing
25 heavily into clean energy that will reduce carbon

1 emissions over the next eight years. With this
2 investment and proper oversight, it will meet the
3 demands of the future, and be competitive for new
4 business for the entire state of Michigan, such as --

5 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

6 MS. RAY: Uh-oh, my time is up?

7 JUDGE FAIRROW: Yeah.

8 MS. RAY: Oh. I didn't see that.

9 JUDGE FAIRROW: Horatio Williams, Anna Harris,
10 and John Hearn, Jr. Ms. Harris?

11 MS. HARRIS: Hi. Good evening, everybody. My
12 name is Anna Harris. I'm a Detroit resident. I'm
13 hearing two sides talking to each other this evening,
14 and I'm hoping that I can share a couple remarks that
15 might unite us a little bit better.

16 So I don't think there is anybody in this room
17 who doesn't want to have a state of the art electrical
18 grid, everyone has reliable power, and that we want to
19 invest in the type of infrastructure that is going to
20 ward off the climate crisis that is hurdling towards us
21 at alarming rates. However, when we know that DTE pulls
22 in a profit -- so I want to be clear, a profit is the
23 money that is made from revenue after expenses are paid.
24 Okay? DTE, for those who aren't aware, is both a public
25 and a private entity. A private entity legally is

1 beholden to its stakeholders, it's financial
2 stakeholders; not you. Not the people who pay for the
3 power, but those who -- stakeholders. Okay?

4 So we don't need to keep paying more rate
5 increases. We need to cut out the component where
6 people are skimming off the top. This is a group
7 problem we can keep having Commissions, we can keep
8 having public meetings, we can put all these Band-Aids
9 on this problem, but the core issue is that our power
10 should be a public utility, like water. Why would we
11 allow people to profit from the production of power,
12 even if we weren't looking at two-degrees Celsius of
13 warming in the next three to five years. We have to
14 structurally change the way that we are providing power
15 to our citizens, and cut out this for-profit component,
16 or we can do this until we're all dead.

17 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. John Hearn, Jr.,
18 Horatio Williams, Reverend Torion Bridges. Is this Mr.
19 Williams?

20 MR. HEARN: I am not.

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Okay. Go ahead, Mr. Hearn.

22 MR. HEARN: I'm John Hearn. I am a pastor and
23 a business man. And for my experience in dealing with
24 DTE, I have been a complainer, and I've been a
25 supporter. And I always support when things are going

1 well, but I will hold you accountable when things are
2 going wrong. I have experienced power outages just like
3 everyone else in this room, and they are an
4 inconvenience.

5 But at the same time, if we do not invest in
6 the grid, and continue just to cut trees, we are going
7 to continue to get what we get. It's time for us not to
8 kick the can down the road, but give them what they need
9 to fix this problem, get the lines put underground so
10 that every change in the weather does not affect our
11 power grid. Now, ever since God said, "Let there be a
12 firmament," --

13 (Off the record interruption)

14 MR. HEARN: -- and made the Heavens and earth
15 there has been weather patterns. DTE's only been around
16 for less than 200 years. The earth was created over
17 2,000 years ago. The technology is here for us to catch
18 up and get these things under ground so that none of us
19 will be affected by this anymore. So I encourage you to
20 look beyond the right now and look for the future. Give
21 them what they need so we don't have to come back next
22 year and ask for it all over again.

23 (Off the record interruption).

24 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you -- oh, is that --

25 MR. HEARN: Thank you; thank you.

1 JUDGE FAIRROW: Okay. Thank you. Reverend
2 Bridges, Jason Kappen, and Rosemary James.

3 MR. BRIDGES: Good evening. My name is Torion
4 Bridges. I have a family of four, and I, outside of my
5 unpaid job at church, work at home. My son and my
6 youngest child, my little daughter, have literally been
7 at home since 2020. There is not a single day that
8 there is not tablets, iPads, laptops and everything else
9 running. Everything is seemingly going up without --
10 without a single choice.

11 Food is up, schools are up, and I am here to
12 join them and the entire number that might feel like
13 everybody is here has also gone up. However, I hear --
14 I came this evening to stand up and say that I too
15 support this rate increase. Not because of anything
16 else, I'm just tired of my power and those that I serve
17 going out. It is time for us to give them exactly what
18 they need, the same way we gave it to the DIA, the same
19 way we gave it to the Zoo, the same way we give it to
20 the libraries, and the --

21 (Off the record interruption)

22 BRIDGES: -- Okay -- that the same way that we
23 do that. No one -- no one stands outside of Kroger
24 whenever bread is up. They don't stand outside at
25 whatever grocery store because eggs and milk are up.

1 It's time for us to realize that this is just the cost
2 of doing business. God Bless you all.

3 JUDGE FAIRROW: Jason Kappen, or Kapper,
4 Rosemary James, Roy Daggs.

5 MR. KAPPEN: Good afternoon, I'm Jason Kappen,
6 with Kappen Tree Service. We're out of Cass City,
7 Michigan. We're a woman-owned tree services that's a
8 subcontractor for DTE Energy. And close to 30 years ago
9 was the first time we ever partnered with DTE, and our
10 first project we had six employees, and now we're almost
11 at 300 employees. Every one of those 300 employees are
12 -- everybody in this room's -- your neighbor, your
13 friend, your family, and they support in the local
14 communities, and we give back to all kinds of places,
15 like the Autism Alliance of Michigan, the United Way.

16 We just donated to the YMCA of the Metro
17 Detroit. We also support the Tree Trim Academy in
18 Detroit. We hire a lot of the graduates from the DTE
19 Academy, and we put them right straight to work, and
20 they have good paying jobs through Local 17, which is
21 supported through DTE. We, again, are in support of
22 this, as well, because it supports more than just our
23 business, but our whole family and community all around
24 us. So thank you.

25 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Rosemary James, Roy

1 Daggs, Betty Johnson.

2 MR. DAGGS: Yes. I'm Roy Daggs, III. First of
3 all, I'm very glad that everybody is here tonight,
4 because I think public forums are very important. About
5 four years ago we had four -- we had four power outages
6 during one summer. During one outage we were down for
7 two days, and during that time I had to throw out a lot
8 of food, and I'm sure many people can relate to that.
9 It was very frustrating, without a doubt.

10 This summer, I must tell you that other times I
11 always look at the weather to see what's going on,
12 because I don't want to buy any food knowing that
13 (inaudible).

14 There could be a storm forthcoming. But this
15 summer we had one power outage, and we were down for
16 eight hours. I've seen improvement with DTE, with
17 communications, with alerts, with reaching out to the
18 community. I think it's very, and for that reason, I am
19 in support of a rate increase. Thank you.

20 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Rosemary James,
21 Betty Johnson, Rafael Mojica.

22 MS. JAMES: Good day. How is everyone? I just
23 want to thank you for being here, and I heard from the
24 beginning that you done heard so many different requests
25 and so many different comments that I can't say anything

1 that somebody else ain't already said. So I want to
2 say, that We the People -- and you got profit right here
3 (indicating), and We the People down here, and the
4 profits keep going up here, and We the People saying,
5 "Help." See you-all later.

6 JUDGE FAIRROW: What's your name, ma'am.

7 MS. JAMES: Rosemary James.

8 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Betty Johnson,
9 Rafael Mojica, Ryan Olechnowicz.

10 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, good evening. I just don't
11 understand what -- what is it that DTE has done with the
12 rates that they already increased.

13 (Off the record interruption)

14 MS. JOHNSON: I heard about trees being cut,
15 and a lot -- a lot of citizens, I think what they need
16 to do is just go from street to street, you know,
17 because the trees actually do need to be cut. And, you
18 know, I've heard people talk about programs you have,
19 and a lot of times those programs, what happens is
20 people are either overqualified, and then you want them
21 to apply for a loan. People -- I think what the
22 citizens really would need is a Grant, and DTE is making
23 money off of us.

24 Where are these Grants? You know, and I -- I'm
25 against it. I do feel that a grid is important, but not

1 at the expense of Detroit residents. I don't -- I don't
2 think -- I don't think --

3 (Off the record interruption)

4 MR. MOJICA: First of all, it's only gas
5 lighters that have just been speaking. Get it in while
6 you can, because DTE is asking for an increase on gas
7 rates, too. My name is Rafael Mojica, and I'm here
8 today representing not only myself, but the thousands of
9 rate payers in Detroit and Highland Park who are tired
10 of paying more for less when it comes to our electricity
11 service.

12 I've worked with Soulardarity, an organization
13 committed to the energy democracy and community led
14 solutions, and we are outraged by the ongoing
15 exploitation of our communities by DTE Energy. Once
16 again we find ourselves here, because DTE is asking for
17 yet another rate increase. This time an outrageous
18 \$456.4-million, while delivering some of the worst
19 service in the nation; in the nation. How can we, the
20 Commission --

21 (Off the record interruption)

22 MR. MOJICA: -- with protecting the public even
23 consider this request when it's clear that DTE's
24 priorities are entirely misaligned with the needs of its
25 customers? We see exactly where our money is going,

1 private jet trips for executives and --

2 (Off the record interruption)

3 MR. MOJICA: -- (inaudible). DTE is asking us
4 to pay for their luxuries while we can barely afford to
5 pay our monthly bills. Ten's of thousands of dollars
6 for flights to Mackinac Island and Florida shareholder
7 meetings are slipped into these rate hike requests,
8 expenses that have nothing to do with the reliability of
9 our grid, or addressing the frequent outages we
10 experience. How is this justifiable? How is this even
11 allowed to be brought to the table?

12 DTE already received a \$368-million rate
13 increase just several months ago. And here they are
14 shamelessly asking for more while nothing has improved.
15 The power goes out in every storm, and we are left in
16 the dark, literally and figuratively. They claim these
17 increases are for infrastructure improvements, but where
18 are the results? It's time to stop pretending that
19 these rate hikes are for our benefit. They are not.

20 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

21 (Off the record interruption).

22 MR. MOJICA: (Inaudible) -- you know that the
23 MPSC (inaudible) 80 percent of their funding coming from
24 them, too. You will be held responsible for this.

25 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. The time is up.

1 (Inaudible) --

2 (Off the record interruption)

3 JUDGE FAIRROW: Articia Bomer, Rhonda Mitchell.

4 MR. OLECHNOWICZ: Good evening. My name is
5 Ryan Olechnowicz. I'm an assistant business manager at
6 the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,
7 Local 17. IBW Local 17 represents over 4200 men and
8 women that work primarily in the electrical utility
9 sector. These are the men and women that tirelessly
10 build and maintain the power lines, the substations, the
11 street lights, traffic signals, and trim the trees on
12 the grid for southeast Michigan.

13 Our organization was first chartered in Detroit
14 in 1892, around the same time the first grid was being
15 built. Over the past 132 years the electrical industry
16 has provided countless men and women from all
17 communities employment that offers competitive wages,
18 provides quality health care, and retirement benefits.
19 All the tools that someone needs to live a secure middle
20 class lifestyle and retire with dignity at a reasonable
21 age. We hope this continues for workers for the next
22 several generations. Electricity has gone from a
23 novelty and luxury in the past to an essential part of
24 everyone's life and the economy.

25 Our current grid has begun to show it's age

1 over the last few years, with severe weather causing
2 greater damage than ever before. Many communities
3 current infrastructure is approaching the end of its
4 useful life. The growing demand for electricity from
5 electric vehicles, data centers, and manufacturing will
6 require significant portions of the grid to be rebuilt.
7 To be environmentally responsible, we must continue to
8 seek out clean sources of energy. The required
9 investment is immense. As much as \$9-billion is
10 planning to be invested in the first five years alone.
11 The sustained benefits from this investment will also be
12 immense for the community.

13 The grid updates, including modern technology,
14 will mean far fewer outages for customers during severe
15 weather. These upgrades also have the added benefit of
16 restoring customers much faster than the system
17 automation. As a labor organization, worker safety is
18 one of our top concerns. The modernization of the grid
19 will also mean a safer work environment for utility
20 workers and the public. This investment will also mean
21 career opportunities for people in their local
22 communities.

23 (Off the record interruption).

24 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you; thank you. Articia
25 Bomer -- Articia Bomer, Rhonda Mitchell, Willie Bell.

1 MS. BOMER: Thank you. Before I start, I just
2 want to say that I am a minister, so if I get to
3 preaching, it's okay to say, "Amen," and "Hallelujah."
4 Okay? Power outages kill. You-all know that; right?
5 Power outages kill. When lights go out, it's just --
6 not just power. Some people have treatments that they
7 need, and need the machine plugged in, and they could
8 die. Also, how much are you paying Mayor Duggan,
9 because he have people out there getting drugs
10 (inaudible) --

11 (Off the record interruption)

12 MS. BOMER: -- telling us to put up solar
13 panels in the City of Detroit and offering house owners
14 \$15,000. Are you-all part of that profit that you-all
15 giving out? Is that part of the rate hike? That's
16 hardly enough money for us. And it's like the man said
17 earlier, in the beginning God created the Heavens and
18 earth. The lights is one of the things he invented, and
19 created, should I say. We have solar panels out in
20 Detroit right now, right off the freeway. Nobody is
21 here to -- a notice to their homes of what could happen,
22 you know, with these solar lights, if we could blow up,
23 or if anything can happen.

24 It's right at the freeway where accidents
25 occur. So if a car flip over and go into the solar

1 panels, are you-all going to -- is there any warning
2 signs up? Will you-all tell what happens with those
3 solar panels? Because last I checked, I gave a lot of
4 money just for the solar panels (inaudible). Everybody
5 on the freeway should be light free, DTE bill free. At
6 one point in time, I thought DTE stood for "Doing
7 Tremendous Excellence," but I find out they're just
8 dogging the elephants in the room, and that's us. We
9 have been --

10 (Off the record interruption)

11 MS. BOMER: -- and next time I go into a City
12 Council meeting, I'm pretty sure Council Member Mary
13 Waters can agree that this is just like coming to a city
14 council meeting where all the members sitting up here
15 smiling at you, welcome you here, telling you that we
16 opened up the door for you, the microphone for two,
17 three minutes, and then smile in our face, and all the
18 while they don't (inaudible). They going to still vote
19 yes. Well, I say you should all team up and know that
20 this is very, very political. This is the
21 administration that DTE is having (inaudible)
22 administration and all this, so remember that when
23 you-all complain about food prices, light bills, gas
24 bills. Remember your administration here. Remember --
25 when you vote in November, who to vote for. Thank you.

1 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. (Inaudible) --

2 MS. MITCHELL: My name is Rhonda Mitchell, and
3 my concern is the grids with the radiation. When they
4 told us they were putting 5G up, it created a lot of
5 people -- a lot of havoc in my neighborhood. I know
6 three people who died of cancer. My concern is I have
7 dead birds falling on a day-to-day basis. No one can
8 tell me why. There was a young lady who was at a
9 meeting before they even started talking about the grid
10 or talking about the solar panels who had warned us once
11 they started putting grids and solar panels up, that
12 people were going to start dying of cancer.

13 I have a plethora amount of people in my
14 neighborhood who was diagnosed of cancer, and it was not
15 so until the grids and the panels and everything started
16 coming up. So my concern is I vote no for it. Again,
17 it's a political move, and it being -- it's just the
18 shareholders and DTE are profiting. We're not
19 profiting, and so I'm not for it at all. Thank you very
20 much.

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Willie Bell, Loren
22 Clift, David Felton.

23 MR. WILLIE BELL: Good evening, Commission. My
24 name is Willie Bell. My personal experience with DTE is
25 -- is I'll just give you a little story. So when the

1 pandemic hit, I was one of the first ones to go in the
2 hospital, and put on a ventilator. When I came home
3 from the hospital, one of the first services that came
4 out was DTE energy, to sum up a true story.

5 I run a nonprofit organization helping fathers
6 and families get back on track with their children. And
7 so they were there providing resources such as masks and
8 sanitizer and everything else. But they also partnered
9 with us, and hosting a COVID-19 testing, so they were on
10 the ground running with us, helping us.

11 One of the other examples with us is a force --
12 a work force development training class together with
13 us. We graduated over 400 men so far. Most of those
14 men got jobs, or retained the jobs that they had. I
15 went -- just like everybody else, we've experienced
16 power outages, and so my wife says -- she says, "We --
17 you know, we need a generator." That was in 2021. So
18 we got the generator in 2021. In 2023 she says, "Why
19 isn't the power going out?" And so I said, "Why do you
20 want the power to go out?" She says, "Well, we spent
21 all that money on that generator, and so" -- in other
22 words, I cannot not support the increase.

23 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Loren Clift, Anya
24 DVT, Carmel Cathey.

25 MR. CLIFT: (Inaudible) -- you've got to look

1 at this more from an environmental aspect. DTE -- DTE
2 bragged that they're taking these coal plants offline,
3 but they're taking their coal plants offline, but
4 they're converting them into gas plants. So there is no
5 big difference. Still the children of Detroit are going
6 to have to breathe the bad air. DTE has made promises
7 on renewable supplies that it hasn't kept, such as solar
8 systems and such.

9 They also make selling power back to the DTE
10 very difficult. And if DTE is given the rubber stamp
11 from the MPSC, I would hope that DTE looks to the
12 future, takes on projects such as burying the power
13 lines, such as making giant grid systems. We could do
14 so much better in this city, and the corporate --
15 (inaudible).

16 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Anya DVT, Carmel
17 Cathey.

18 MS. ANYA DVT: Hi. My name is Anya. I live in
19 Detroit, and I work in tax foreclosure prevention. The
20 fact of the matter is that DTE is directly stealing from
21 public services, like transit and education with these
22 rate hikes. People are not paying their property taxes,
23 through which our public services are funded, because
24 having lights and gas shut off is more immediate than
25 tax foreclosure.

1 They're being forced to pay DTE shareholders
2 before they're able to contribute toward the common
3 good. My second point is that SSI, Social Security
4 Income increased three percent last year. DTE got a six
5 percent rate hike already in December, and now wants a
6 nine percent hike. The average DTE bill that I see is
7 about \$300, because often my clients who pay on back
8 bills in addition to their current bills.

9 This is already about a third of their income.
10 At this rate, it will become half of their income paid
11 to DTE within a decade. Also, my friends that I house
12 next to them explode in Ann Arbor because the neighbor
13 was using alternative sources of heat. I have had at
14 least one client every two months who uses alternative
15 sources of heat and energy during the winter because
16 they can't afford DTE. I am very opposed to these rate
17 hikes, and I am for a rate decrease, which we could have
18 if DTE didn't give all of their profits to their
19 shareholders.

20 (Off the record interruption).

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Meku Baron-Galbavi, Mitchell
22 Batchelder.

23 MS. CATHEY: Okay. So thank you for coming
24 down. You're in a city that has spirit. That's why we
25 have The Spirit of Detroit downtown. And the spirit is

1 we don't like doing this. We don't --

2 (Off the record interruption)

3 MS. CATHEY: We want to know who is
4 accountable? Who's going to be accountable for this --
5 this horrible thing that's going on? There's grandmas,
6 there's babies that's going to go cold this winter.
7 Even if they can't go to DHS and get help, why are we
8 funneling all this backdoor money and when we really
9 shouldn't be paying this price.

10 Go in Highland Park and take a whiff; it smells
11 like mildew. This mildew is coming from DTE digging up
12 in our ground and leaving gravel in its place. If we
13 went to Dearborn Heights, if we went to Sterling
14 Heights, this would never be accepted. They are -- they
15 are putting it directly in our face, and they're
16 expecting us to take a hike, and we won't. You're
17 asking them to take a hike? We're in 2024 and seeing
18 people out in space almost every day now. We're doing
19 (inaudible) technology, we are advancing in all type of
20 technology.

21 You're telling me that DTE cannot come up with
22 a way to find renewable energy so that we can have
23 affordable energy? We want -- we want DTE and also the
24 MPS (sic) to know that we know that they are playing in
25 our faces, and we don't take it very lightly. Thank

1 you.

2 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Meku Baron-Galbavi,
3 Mitchell Batchelder, Kevin Bryant.

4 MR. BATCHELDER: Hello. My name is Mitch
5 Batchelder. I'm a Detroit resident and I live in
6 Woodbridge. One of the first conversations I had with a
7 neighbor on Woodbridge when I moved there was them
8 telling me to get used to the lengthy power outages.
9 They proceeded to give me candles so I would be prepared
10 for the dark. I'm also a labor union organizer for the
11 American Federation of Teachers. I work with educators
12 and health care professionals in Detroit and throughout
13 the state.

14 In my work, I often oppose corporations who
15 threaten to dismantle unions and treat their workers
16 with contempt, all in the name of profit. Ultimately,
17 it's the communities that these workers serve in
18 hospitals, schools, and universities that suffer as a
19 result of unchecked corporate greed and community spaces
20 whose resources should be of public good. Does that
21 sound familiar? DTE is no different than the union
22 busters that I come across daily in my work.

23 In fact, I think DTE may even be worse. I know
24 a bully that thinks they're invincible when I see one,
25 but the people of Detroit and Michigan will not back

1 down. It's inexcusable for DTE to profit off the
2 majority of Black in a low income city while they fail
3 to provide reliable and affordable energy, and suffer no
4 consequences (inaudible).

5 (Off the record interruption).

6 MR. BATCHELDER: The people of this city and
7 Michigan deserve better and shouldn't have to continue
8 paying more for less. I am in strong opposition to
9 DTE's proposed electrical rate increase, and I strongly
10 urge the Commission to stand with the people of Detroit
11 and Michigan and reject this handout to DTE.

12 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. The next speaker,
13 the first name is M-e-k-u, the last name is,
14 B-a-r-o-n-G-a-l-b-a-v-i. Okay. And then Kevin Bryant
15 and Edith Lee-Payne.

16 MR. BARON-GALBAVI: Hi. My name is Meku, and
17 I'm a lifelong DTE customer, unfortunately, and a
18 current Detroit resident. I strongly oppose any hike in
19 electricity rates. No for-profit company that makes
20 over \$2-billion in profit, that is also guaranteed a
21 monopoly over us, makes enough profit to prevent all
22 shutoffs of all its customers 52 times over should ever
23 be allowed to charge more until they can provide safe,
24 reliable services.

25 They should get no rate hike until they can

1 guarantee that our power does not go out every time it
2 rains. They should get no rate hike until they stop
3 poisoning our community with dirty air and toxic waste.
4 We demand they improve our service, upgrade our grid
5 here in the city, in all parts of the city, using their
6 existing over \$2-billion in profit before we ever give
7 them more money. Here in this city, we are so lucky
8 that we have an income-based water affordability plan,
9 that is not perfect, but we do have one. And I -- I
10 also work in property tax foreclosure prevention, and
11 the number one request that I get when it comes to
12 utilities is -- "Is there a program like that for energy
13 and utilities?" There is not.

14 There is no income-based plan for people to
15 keep their power on. DTE can shut off people's power,
16 but then they could take away people's children for not
17 having power in their homes. We need an income-based
18 affordability plan for energy in this city. And as a
19 government regulatory body, you work for us, the People
20 of Michigan, and not corporations. (Inaudible) -- thank
21 you.

22 (Off the record interruption).

23 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Kevin Bryant, Edith
24 Payne.

25 MR. BRYANT: Hello, my name is Kevin Bryant,

1 and I was born and raised here in the City of Detroit.
2 As a matter of fact, I grew up in a church right across
3 the street here in Community Temple, and that was how we
4 paid for gas and -- (inaudible) is the pastor, right
5 across the street from Mumford here. After growing up
6 here, I graduated from the University of Michigan. I
7 played football there. I was part of the National
8 Championship Team (inaudible) team. And afterwards I
9 was able to start a business. I was fortunate enough,
10 and God blessed me to start a business, and I was able
11 to become a partner with DTE.

12 Now, I'm not for -- I have my mother, and my
13 father, and my grandmother, they're all on a fixed
14 income. I'm not for, you know, maybe increasing their
15 rates. But our company today employs over 200 people
16 out of the City of Detroit. I'm providing well-paying
17 jobs. They're all part of the union, where they're
18 getting benefits, retirement packages, and -- and they
19 have a career path. This opportunity was afforded by
20 DTE, and we're doing great work within the City of
21 Detroit and across the state of Michigan. Hey, if the
22 working class (inaudible) --

23 (Off the record interruption)

24 MR. BRYANT: Let me finish. The increase will
25 allow us --

1 JUDGE FAIRROW: (Inaudible) --

2 MR. BRYANT: -- will allow us jobs for
3 companies like ours to provide more employment and more
4 opportunities for people who have never had opportunity.

5 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Ms. Payne, and
6 after her, Madelyn Chav, C-h-a-v, and Chinyere Neale.
7 Ms. Payne?

8 MS. LEE-PAYNE: Good evening. (Inaudible). We
9 are again going through the finale and yet another
10 hearing. You did hear what you already know. DTE
11 Energy does not merit a rate increase or any amount, for
12 any purpose, for at least the next five years or more.
13 According to Michigan Public Service Commission records,
14 you have approved electric increases between 2016 and
15 December 1st, 2023 in the amount of \$639.4-million. And
16 now they want another 400-plus.

17 Chairman -- Chairman Norcia reported to his
18 shareholders -- I happened to be on the call on November
19 1st, the third quarter earnings, saying that DTE was
20 facing a \$370-million in headwinds, and they were
21 waiting on the MPSC to approve their increase in early
22 December. Well, on December 1st, the MPSC proved --
23 approved not 370 million, but 368 million. How about
24 that? Also, in November of 2023, DTE said they were
25 going to pass on a \$300 million -- \$300-million savings

1 to the tax pay- -- rate payers that amounted to a \$5
2 reduction in our bills.

3 But we've seen it; we got an increase. I don't
4 know how that happened. As rate payer who hears about
5 upgrading the infrastructure, I need to know how many of
6 the 444,000, or 447,000 miles -- I can't get it right.
7 I see different things -- how many of the 1.1 million
8 homes and 432,000 distribution transformers, the 260
9 million miles of conductors have been replaced, and
10 upgraded to the 676 substations with that \$639-million
11 that they already have?

12 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

13 MS. LEE-PAYNE: With the fires that I reported
14 to you -- I had two house files because DTE didn't do
15 what they were supposed to do.

16 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. You can submit your
17 additional comments to the Commission in writing.

18 MS. LEE-PAYNE: Okay. But you need to -- you
19 need to know --

20 JUDGE FAIRROW: The next speaker -- excuse me.
21 Thank you. Your time is up.

22 MS. LEE-PAYNE: -- that it only requires \$2,000
23 to clear one mile of line.

24 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Your time is up.
25 The next speaker is --

1 (Off the record interruption)

2 JUDGE FAIRROW: Please. We are going to do
3 this orderly. We will do this orderly. We will do this
4 orderly. You interrupting means that less people can
5 speak. She -- her -- she had her time. We've been
6 respectful and allowed everyone to have the same amount
7 of time. That's what we're going to do. The next
8 speaker is C- -- the last name is C-h-a-v, or C-h-a-u.
9 Okay.

10 (Off the record interruption).

11 JUDGE FAIRROW: Come up to the microphone.
12 Come on up to the microphone.

13 MS. CHAU: My name is Madelyn. When I as
14 living in Ann Arbor with two other people, my total
15 monthly electric bill was 30 to \$40. Individually, I
16 usually paid about \$15 each month for electricity. I've
17 heard of some of my peers in Detroit paying upwards of
18 \$200 each month while living alone. Simply because in
19 the difference in location their bill was over ten times
20 my own.

21 This is an inequity that exists between
22 high-income -- high-income areas and low-income areas.
23 I am in strong opposition to DTE's proposed electric
24 rate increase, and I strongly urge the Michigan Public
25 Service Commission to stand with the People of Michigan

1 and reject this handout to DTE.

2 JUDGE FAIRROW: Chinyere, the last name is,
3 N-e-a-l-e. Okay. Yes. And next, Brian Smigielski, and
4 Roshaun Harris.

5 MS. NEALE: Good afternoon. My name is
6 Chinyere Neale, and I'm a lifelong Detroit resident and
7 DTE rate payer. I agree with all those people who say
8 that we need to upgrade our grid. I believe those
9 people who have said that DTE has been beneficial to
10 their communities and their employees. However, the
11 reason our grid is in such bad shape is because DTE has
12 put shareholder profits over maintenance of the grid.
13 If I -- if I run a business, my profit is what is left
14 after I've taken care of all my business, including
15 maintenance, and repairs, and, you know, wages and
16 everything, and then I have profits.

17 Sometimes I have a lot of profits, sometimes I
18 have a little profit, sometimes I maybe have no profit.
19 That would the year that I would maybe have to increase
20 my prices. However, DTE has guaranteed profit, and they
21 wait until, you know, all hell breaks loose and then
22 they want a rate increase to repair things that they
23 should have been maintaining over the course of their
24 years of profit.

25 So, you know, I just don't understand. You

1 know, we're supposed to live in a democracy. We're
2 supposed to live in a capitalist system. The market is
3 supposed to dictate what happens. But DTE has a
4 guaranteed profit, and so my objection to a rate
5 increase is -- why are they getting their profit no
6 matter what? Thank you.

7 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Brian Smigielski,
8 Roshaun Harris, Jeff Bohm.

9 (Off the record interruption).

10 MR. SMIGIELSKI: My name is Bryan Smigielski,
11 (inaudible) and Sierra Club organizer. We have a Beyond
12 Coal Campaign here in Michigan. One of the main reasons
13 DTE is pushing this rate hike is because of its massive
14 spending spree. Planning to spend (inaudible)
15 \$8.2-billion over the next three years, on top of 4.9
16 billion spent over the last two years. They want to
17 spend over \$450-million dollars? The Attorney General's
18 office said they only needed around 130 million. Why do
19 they -- why are they trying to spend more money? Well,
20 here's the thing: The more money that DTE spends, the
21 more profit they're guaranteed to make. DTE is
22 guaranteed a high rate of return in an ever-growing pile
23 of investments, meaning more profit for them came
24 straight out of our pockets.

25 This -- this situation is especially troubling

1 when we consider that these rate structures were
2 designed based on a different economic era, one with a
3 more equitable distribution of wealth, which meant
4 residents had a far lower energy burden, a fraction of
5 income a resident has to spend on energy bills. Today,
6 the economic reality is starkly different. We live in
7 something called "late-stage capitalism." You've heard
8 of it.

9 In Detroit, low-income households face an
10 average energy burden of over ten percent, nearly three
11 times the national average. Many families are
12 struggling to keep the lights on, while DTE is asking
13 the MPSC, you all, to force these residents to finance
14 unnecessary projects that may not benefit them, and they
15 expect not only to continue their high rate of return,
16 they expect increasing profits year after year. I ask
17 the Commission, why should DTE continue to enjoy robust,
18 guaranteed profits while the people it serves are
19 confronted with record-high energy burdens? Why should
20 DTE be exempt from the shifting economic trend that not
21 only its customers has faced, but nearly all American
22 business must face. It's time for the Commission to
23 make choices that reflect a deeper systemic of the
24 shifting economic realities and protect residents
25 (inaudible) consumers over the long term. This means

1 that they must lower DTE's guaranteed rate of return to
2 reflect today's economic condition, prevent excessive
3 profits --

4 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

5 MR. SMIGIELSKI: -- more expense -- all right.

6 JUDGE FAIRROW: Mr. Harris.

7 MR. SMIGIELSKI: I want to ask one question.

8 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you, sir.

9 (Off the record interruption).

10 JUDGE FAIRROW: Mr. Harris; Mr. Harris, are you
11 yielding your time to him? So you will not speak then,
12 is that what you're saying?

13 MR. HARRIS: No. I'm letting him speak. Go
14 ahead.

15 JUDGE FAIRROW: Then go ahead with your
16 comment, sir, Mr. Harris. We're moving to Mr. Harris.

17 (Off the record interruption).

18 JUDGE FAIRROW: Listen, we will do this
19 orderly. You're not going to bully me, so --

20 MR. HARRIS: Can I yield part of my time to the
21 gentleman that was just speaking?

22 JUDGE FAIRROW: You can make your comment now
23 if you want to.

24 MR. HARRIS: (Inaudible). First and foremost,
25 my name is Roshaun Harris. I'm the director of Power

1 Building and Advocacy over at Eastside Community
2 Network. I'm going to keep it simple and plain, so
3 whoever uses my time can take it. This is an abusive
4 relationship, and what -- and the reason why you hear
5 moans and the groans from everybody in this audience is
6 because of the abuse of the (inaudible), the parts of a
7 lot of our elders, because they can't have their
8 machines, their oxygen machines, because they can't have
9 their insulin cold; right?

10 I'm a diabetic; right? So this hits home. My
11 father, I believe, passed on early because we lived in a
12 house without lights and gas for a year while he was
13 suffering from prostate cancer. So this is real for me.
14 And you guys are the only ones who actually have the
15 power -- actually have the power to stop this abuse.
16 And you have person, after person, after person come up
17 here, give their testimony, give their life story, talk
18 about their neighbors, talk about the people they care
19 about most. And you sit here and witness this abuse,
20 and you have the power to do something about it, yet you
21 don't. How do you sleep at night? How do you sleep at
22 night? How do you sleep at night?

23 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you (inaudible). Oh, are
24 you done?

25 MR. HARRIS: I hope and pray --

1 (Off the record interruption)

2 MR. HARRIS: -- (inaudible). I hope whatever
3 kickbacks you got coming to you make you feel real good,
4 because the people are suffering, are suffering, while
5 you are appointed by the State to protect us, to keep us
6 safe from harm, with our tax dollars. But this is the
7 treatment we get.

8 And I'm going to say one last thing about this
9 abusive relationship. Not only does it need to stop, we
10 need to hold those accountable, and that's the corporate
11 actors, and that's these clowns that sitting up there,
12 smiling in our face --

13 (Off the record interruption)

14 MR. HARRIS: -- something down when they don't
15 have our backs and our best interest at heart. I yield
16 the rest of my time.

17 JUDGE FAIRROW: Jeff Bohm (inaudible) -- and
18 Max Boyd.

19 MR. BOHM: First of all, I would like to thank
20 you for letting me speak today. My name is Jeff Bohm,
21 I'm the County Board Chairman of St. Clair County. I've
22 been on the Board for 20 years, Board Chairman for 14.
23 We have a lot of DTE assets in St. Clair County. DTE
24 first built their plant in Marysville back in 1914, is
25 when they started that plant. That plant did get

1 decommissioned in 2000, and then it did get tore down.
2 And we received an environ- -- and environmental grant
3 from the state of Michigan to oversee the cleanup of
4 that. And St. Clair County actually owns the landfill,
5 too, so all that material that made it to our landfill
6 was tested, the site was approved and signed off 100
7 percent, so they did a great job of cleaning up
8 (inaudible).

9 We have the new gas fire plant that just
10 recently opened, the Blue Water Energy Center. We
11 closed the St. Clair plant just recently closed. It was
12 an electric -- no -- it was a coal fire plant. That
13 plant almost represented 2,000 megawatts of power. DTE
14 produces 11,000 megawatts of power; correct? So when
15 you take 2,000 megawatts offline, there is a heavy
16 price that goes along with replacing that (inaudible)
17 renewables. And I'm not here, you know, for or against
18 (inaudible). I'm just talking a little bit about what
19 DTE's done in our community, have employed a lot of
20 people -- (inaudible) --, you know, a good corporate
21 citizen.

22 (Off the record interruption).

23 MR. BOHM: And so I just think that this
24 journey that -- that you're going to have to (inaudible)
25 face (inaudible) these decisions understanding

1 renewables and those types of things into the whole
2 power grid comes with a heavy price tag. So thank you.

3 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Alonso Del Arte, or
4 Art (phonetic), Max Boyd, Francesca Stephenson.

5 MR. BOYD: My name is Max Boyd. I work with an
6 energy justice organization, Soulardarity, Highland
7 Park. I'm also a pastor in Highland Park. And because
8 of my position, I can tell you countless, gut-wrenching
9 stories of residents in impossible situations because of
10 DTE. Trust me, I got plenty, but they're -- a lot
11 aren't here because they're working two-plus jobs to
12 turn off -- to afford their bills. I can also sit here
13 and tell you about statistics. We've done our research
14 on DTE. We can tell you about record-breaking profits
15 year after year, coupled with how abysmal the grid
16 reliability is.

17 But I want to talk to you about distance.
18 Because you see tonight you will hear, and you have
19 heard so many heart-wrenching stories of residents. You
20 can hear the anger and the disappointment. Unless
21 you're a sociopath, you -- you feel it, too. But the
22 worst part about this entire situation is you get to go
23 home. You get to go home. You don't have to live our
24 lives. You get to shake off all of this
25 uncomfortability (phonetic). In a few days, that night

1 you went through in Detroit will be in the back of your
2 mind. And the worst part about all of this is that
3 we're not done. We know that DTE asked for an insane
4 amount of money, and then they're expecting to get a
5 lesser amount, and then you come and check the box of
6 talking to all the wonderful residents of Detroit, and
7 you give them the exact amount they were expecting in
8 the first place.

9 You get to pride yourself on an absolutely win.
10 You quelled the angry mob lessening the amount, but
11 you've given DTE some money so they can post record
12 profits again. And I'm not even going to get into how
13 (inaudible) applying the MPSC and DTE's money is, but
14 you know that's a win for you, too. And I'm just
15 standing here wishing and hoping that you would have the
16 courage to say no entirely to the rate hike, and shut
17 this down. Let them use those record-breaking profits
18 --

19 (Off the record interruption)

20 MR. BOYD: -- do what they're supposed to do.
21 I wish you would have the backbone to do what you were
22 hired to do, to represent our lives and our stories
23 (inaudible) of a profit-eating giant like DTE. But that
24 would require you to bridge the gap of the distance
25 that's so easy to hide behind.

1 (Off the record interruption).

2 JUDGE FAIRROW: (Inaudible) -- Francesca
3 Stephenson, Bob Garcia.

4 MS. STEVENSON: Hi. My name is Francesca
5 Stevenson, and I live in New Center, in Detroit. And I
6 want to thank the Commission for allowing me to make a
7 comment tonight. I'm here because I would like to ask
8 the Commission to deny DTE's request to raise rates on
9 electricity. So others have already mentioned that DTE
10 made \$2-billion in profit last year, and that they're
11 trying to use this rate increase to pay for private jets
12 for their executives to attend meetings.

13 This rate increase request is corporate greed,
14 plain and simple, and the last thing the hard-working
15 people of Michigan need is to pay more for electricity.
16 As an example of DTE's greed, I would like to tell you
17 about my parents, who have been living in the same house
18 in Detroit for over 35 years. And when I was growing
19 up, in 20 years, we only experienced one power outage.
20 Now they happen every year. A couple years ago they
21 lost power in the middle of winter, when it's 20 degrees
22 outside, and my parents are in their 60's.

23 They don't need to be dealing with that, with
24 no working furnace when it's 20 degrees outside. So
25 they brought -- they bought a generator. And so DTE

1 told my parents that because of this new generator, they
2 would need to pay \$3,000 for a new meter. They demanded
3 payment in full, up front, before they would even start
4 the work. 1700 of that was labor costs. They sent two
5 workers who worked for one hour. And do you think that
6 each of those workers were getting \$850 an hour? I
7 mean, that would be awesome if they were, but I
8 seriously doubt it.

9 I think DTE was pocketing that money. As my
10 mom said, DTE rips people off because they can get away
11 with it. Please deny this rate increase, because the
12 people in Michigan need this money more than DTE does.
13 And if DTE executives need to travel, they can fly
14 commercial like the rest of us.

15 (Off the record interruption).

16 JUDGE FAIRROW: The last name is, D-e-l,
17 A-r-t-e.

18 MR. DEL ARTE: Hi, I'm Al. I live by the
19 Michigan Central Station. Back in January I endured a
20 power outage of almost 24 hours, and I wondered, am I
21 going to die? Is this how I die? But, you know, I'm
22 healthy enough. But I wonder about the other people
23 during that same power outage, you know, people with
24 oxygen, ventilate, respirators, you know, or
25 refrigerators to keep medicine cold. Did they survive?

1 I don't know. I hope they did.

2 And then over the summer, you know, I've talked
3 to some people who have trouble paying their bills, and
4 then -- so I was told the state emergency relief fund
5 ran out in -- back in July, I think it was, and like --
6 sorry. No more money until October. And then I also
7 work on the stock market. So DTE on New York Stock
8 Exchange, the (inaudible) \$1 -- \$1.02, and then I did
9 the math. So if they put the two cents away -- but,
10 hey, investments. You only get the \$1. These two cents
11 could fund the state emergency relief fund for the whole
12 year. So --

13 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Bob Garcia, Andrea
14 Pierce, the last name is, H-a-e. Bob Garcia? Andrea
15 Pierce? It might and Gwen Hae (phonetic)? Ryan
16 Rosario, Caitlin Homrich-Knieling, and Jeffrey (sic)
17 Griffin.

18 MS. PIERCE: Can you hear me? Oh.

19 JUDGE FAIRROW: What's your name?

20 MS. PIERCE: Andrea Pierce.

21 JUDGE FAIRROW: Go ahead.

22 MS. PIERCE: Hello, everybody. I'm Andrea
23 Pierce. I am at Michigan Environmental Justice
24 Coalition, I'm the policy director. I have to tell you,
25 I was there when the MPSC -- when you voted for and

1 approved 36- -- 3- -- no -- 368 million. That was
2 implemented and started in December, and I got up and
3 made my comment, and said you ruined Christmas for a lot
4 of people. You did. And that's the same one -- that's
5 the same meeting where you also approved the Line 5
6 tunnel, which you also don't need.

7 So I've got to tell you, I've been doing
8 research on this, because I've been to a few of your
9 meetings, and you guys just sit there and rubber stamp
10 all of these rate increases, Consumers Power, DTE,
11 whoever needs the rate increase, except for us. We need
12 a decrease. We need to have some money. We need to be
13 able to pay our bills; those keep coming. We need food.
14 We have children we need to take care of. Now, I was
15 doing research. Okay? And read that up until a decade
16 ago -- a decade ago, ten years, rate -- rate increases
17 were not this common. They would -- DTE would ask for a
18 rate increase and get one about every three years. We
19 just gave them one in December for electricity. They
20 also asked for one in January for gas.

21 (Off the record interruption).

22 MS. PIERCE: And corporate jets. We need to go
23 over their expenditures. Where are they spending this
24 money? Where is it going? We are paying more now for
25 gas, electricity. We're not paying for food. We're

1 paying for truck drivers. Why? Because the rates are
2 going up. It's an economy thing. It keeps going up,
3 up, up. No matter what happens, the end result is going
4 to end up with us paying more for everything that we
5 need, want, or desire, and it's a bunch of crap. DTE is
6 seeing record profits. You've heard this. You know
7 this. You've seen the same paperwork I have.

8 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

9 MS. PIERCE: I oppose.

10 JUDGE FAIRROW: Bob Garcia, Gwen Hae, Ryan
11 Rosario, Caitlin Homrich-Knieling, Jeffrey Griffin --
12 Jerry Griffin. I apologize.

13 MS. HOMRICH-KNIELING: Hello. It's Caitlin
14 Homrich-Knieling.

15 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you.

16 MS. HOMRICH-KNIELING: I am a resident of
17 Detroit and a mom of two toddlers. For the past four
18 years, I've been having to watch my baby's monitor, what
19 the temperature is in their room, and decide, like, how
20 much heat or how much AC I have in my house, and I've
21 watch the rate increase. So like how cold is too cold
22 for a baby? Like 62 degrees all night long? -- 63? It
23 feels like it's pushing it, and my bill was \$450 for six
24 months last winter. It's not okay. So we know you
25 won't reject it. Most of the rate hike requests

1 happened in 2022. We ask that you reject it again. And
2 with the time of day increase that happened last year,
3 it's like that rejection didn't even happen. And then
4 you approved another increase. So we're learning, it's
5 been years now. We're watching you; we're getting
6 organized. We're being peaceful now. Okay. This is
7 peaceful.

8 (Off the record interruption).

9 JUDGE FAIRROW: Ryan Rosario, Jerry Griffin,
10 Chantel Watkins. Ryan Rosario? Jerry Griffin? Chantel
11 Watkins?

12 MS. WATKINS: Hey, I'm Chantel Watkins, and not
13 only do I want to reject the rate, I also want to know
14 when the Michigan Public Service Commission is actually
15 going to hold DTE accountable for their record profits?
16 It's very obvious we know a lot about what DTE does.
17 They gave Helena Scott, who is the head of the Energy
18 Commission at least \$20,000. They've given your boss,
19 Governor Whitmer, at least \$50,000, and it really
20 doesn't matter what side of the fence people are on,
21 there is no corporate accountability at all.

22 And one of the biggest things that the Public
23 Service Commission is supposed to do is hold those
24 people accountable. So if they're getting \$2-billion in
25 record profits and taking private jets, what systems do

1 you have in place to actually hold them accountable for
2 those things that when we have like no power, people are
3 getting \$35. Where do you step up in your job to
4 actually do something to make sure that that no longer
5 happens? My father is 70 years old. Me and my
6 siblings, who all are working class, had to come up with
7 \$15,000 in order to get him a generator so he can have
8 his oxygen. My father had almost died twice during
9 power outages, and there is not one thing that you guys
10 are doing to hold them accountable for those things.

11 So not only should they not get more money, you
12 guys should actually put some systems in place to hold
13 them accountable for when they as for rate increase and
14 do nothing but profit from it. So not only should you
15 reject it, but you should go a little bit further and,
16 you know, spend a little bit more of your day doing your
17 job. Thank you.

18 (Off the record interruption).

19 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Stephanie Johnson,
20 Mia McPherson, Kamau Clark. Stephanie Johnson, Mia
21 McPherson, Kamau Clark. Come on up to the microphone.

22 MS. JOHNSON: Hi, I'm Stephanie Johnson.
23 (Inaudible) Detroit, and I'm with those guys in the
24 yellow shirts and the black shirts. So thanks for this
25 opportunity to say that I don't support a rate increase

1 for DTE. We all know that DTE has exclusive possession
2 and control of gas and electricity supply to Detroit,
3 and the MPSC is the only intervention rate payer
4 (inaudible) to limit DTE's rate increases. Nothing
5 about this entire process from you all being appointed
6 by the Governor to the utility monopoly is democratic or
7 meets the criteria of capitalism.

8 Rate payers are captives to whatever decision
9 the MPSC makes in favor of DTE. This situation can be
10 compared to -- should I say it? -- slavery, with DTE as
11 the master. So my appeal is for all of you, because
12 you're our court of appeals for our liberty against our
13 slave master to consider DTE's responsibility to their
14 rate payers with some scripture. Colossians 4, verse 1:
15 "Masters, provide your slaves with that which is right
16 and fair, because you know that you also have a Master
17 in heaven."

18 JUDGE FAIRROW: (Inaudible).

19 (Off the record interruption).

20 MR. CLARK: Hi. How are you? I'm Kamau. I'm
21 sure you're wondering why the guy in the bootie shorts
22 is here to talk to you-all. So I -- I'm not going to
23 say something -- I'm just going to kind of highlight
24 some areas that we heard today. We've heard the side of
25 business people and we've heard the side of the people.

1 So let's talk about some of the business
2 people. Earlier you heard from the Detroit Association
3 of Black Organizations. From 2013 to 2018, they've
4 actually received \$133,000 from the Alliance for
5 Michigan Power, which is one of DTE's (inaudible)
6 accounts that they use to put money into advocacy. So
7 you see some of those businesses in here, they're
8 advocating because they got money to do it; right?

9 So (inaudible) --

10 (Off the record interruption)

11 MR. CLARK: -- because a lot of transaction is
12 happening. I have the receipts. Thank you. There's a
13 lot of transactions that bills we're paying, we're
14 paying far too much. There is also people here, not
15 organizations of business people making profits. We're
16 telling you we, as homeowners, as renters, we're paying
17 too much. I live on the east side. I've got a
18 40-year-old furnace I call Burnace (phonetic) the
19 Furnace. My bill, \$600 in the winter, \$600. I'm 26. I
20 don't got \$600 per month to pay for energy. So you
21 really need to be listening to people. We need to a
22 decrease to our bill. We need a full rejection, not a
23 partial, not a -- not a maybe, not a 30 percent
24 (inaudible) --

25 (Off the record interruption)

1 MR. CLARK: You need a full rejection. And if
2 you don't do that, then you didn't do your job. Thank
3 you.

4 (Off the record interruption).

5 JUDGE FAIRROW: (Inaudible) -- Jimenez, Ann
6 Johnson.

7 MS. MCPHERSON: Hello, what up dogs? I am here
8 with the great people at We the People of Michigan. I
9 am a registered nurse, and I'm here today to speak about
10 health concerns that I have. A few comments that I have
11 written: What is the justification for rate increase
12 for unreliable utility services that are reliant on
13 fossil fuels? This reliance on fossil fuels is a direct
14 threat to our health. We have already seen the
15 consequences of fossil fuel reliance, and this will
16 continue.

17 DTE will face no consequences for this, but we
18 will continue to be ill. We will continue to have ill
19 patients, and on our death certificates it won't say DTE
20 pollution; it won't. It will say lung disease and
21 congestive heart failure; it will say stroke. But the
22 finger will never be pointed at DTE, yet their profits
23 will remain full while we struggle to pay our bills. Is
24 there any consideration for our current economic crisis
25 and how rate hikes will exacerbate people's financial

1 struggles? I'm concerned about greater funding for
2 fossil fuels and how they impact community health. What
3 is DTE's response to this? What is their plan? We're
4 essentially being forced to pay more for our own demise.
5 Who's side are you on? Who are you in service to, DTE
6 or The People?

7 If our input is truly valuable, as you said,
8 Commissioner, translate our comments into action. Don't
9 let our participation be in vain. And the last thing
10 that I will leave you with, is how can you expect us to
11 believe that the rate increase will go towards renewable
12 energy/updating the grid if previous rate increases went
13 into shareholder's pockets? And my last comment:
14 What's stopping DTE from fixing their grid years ago?
15 Give (inaudible) for that. Thank you.

16 JUDGE FAIRROW: Victor Jimenez, Ann Johnson,
17 Andrew Kaplowitz.

18 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Ann
19 Johnson. I want to talk about this on-peak, off-peak.
20 People's refrigerators have to be on constantly, so they
21 get four extra hours to quadruple the profit? That
22 don't make no sense. When the grid went out in '06,
23 it's '24 now, how come it ain't fixed? You said they
24 asking for more money, but we're not getting nothing.
25 The last outage we had, I spent \$300 on food. You know

1 what got back? \$25. So if I lose \$300, DTE should have
2 paid me back the money. You want money, but you're not
3 putting nothing in the system for the people. Don't
4 razz me; don't razz me. Because if you're going to work
5 for me, work for me.

6 Because see, when my lights go out, (inaudible)
7 that DTE guy, I talked to him before. I had a issue at
8 the house that I was renting. The lights was switching
9 off and on, power surges. I asked them to come and turn
10 the fuses off the poles. Me and my dog had to sleep in
11 the car. I got the video tape. Channel 2, 4, and 7
12 came. But you know when DTE came, after I spent the
13 night in the car? They sent 14 trucks to put up a new
14 meter and stuff when they could have just sent one
15 person to take those fuses out of the pole. That's all
16 I asked for.

17 I called you all several times about DTE and
18 their (inaudible). I turn lights off in part of my -- I
19 got a two-bedroom house. I turn light off from the
20 circuit breaker, and I only need the refrigerator and
21 the room with my cameras on so I can make sure there
22 ain't nobody coming in my house. And they still send me
23 a \$300 bill. How is that? If I done turned off all of
24 the power surges in my house, and I'm only using for my
25 refrigerator, you-all need to fix that.

1 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Victor Jimenez,
2 Andrew Kaplowitz.

3 UNKNOWN PERSON: Did you say (inaudible)?

4 JUDGE FAIRROW: Victor Jimenez? Andrew
5 Kaplowitz.

6 MR. JIMENEZ: Thank you very much. Victor
7 Jimenez. I am here as an organizer with the Michigan
8 League of Conservation Voters, a lifelong resident in
9 Michigan, and lifelong community member of southwest
10 Detroit, and unfortunately a consumer, by -- not by
11 choice, of DTE Energy. And you know that they made a
12 habit of squeezing more money out of its customers year
13 after year.

14 Since 2017, they've pushed the rate hikes,
15 putting profits ahead of people every single year, ahead
16 of the people that they serve. And these profits, we've
17 seen how they spend their money. We've heard a lot
18 about that tonight. And we've had enough of it, and
19 we've seen none of it go towards helping our grid. And
20 the latest posed hike, we know it's outrageous. And the
21 Attorney General agrees.

22 The Michigan League of Conservation Voters
23 stands for accountability, especially when it comes to
24 big utilities that meets safety, reliability, and
25 affordability, and DTE is failing at all three accounts.

1 Their constant rate hikes weigh down Michigan families
2 while their track record show they prioritize profit
3 over providing the basic services we deserve, reliable,
4 affordable, and clean energy. And DTE has left our
5 neighborhood in the dark, literally and figuratively
6 over the years, as well.

7 We're not asking for handouts, and we don't
8 need anymore social welfare. It's appreciated, but it's
9 not their job, and we're demanding that they fill their
10 role, for once. We're demanding access to clean energy,
11 access to lower bills, and access to a future where our
12 zip code doesn't dictate our energy options.

13 Like I said, the Attorney General has called
14 this rate hike excessive and unnecessary, and she's
15 right. The Michigan residents here deserve -- and we
16 already -- we deserve better, reliable, affordable
17 service, and we're paying some of the highest rates in
18 the country for that terrible services, courtesy of DTE.
19 We deserve better, and you know, these things we're
20 asking for, they're the bare minimum, and they should be
21 the expectation. And like many folks said, we should be
22 talking about why are we holding their rates the same
23 rate, not why are we increasing or why should we.

24 The Commission -- the Commission should reject
25 this entirely, and they should hold accountable for

1 what's enough is enough.

2 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Andrew Kaplowitz.

3 (Off the record interruption)

4 MR. KAPLOWITZ: All right. I'm just going to
5 hold the mic. (Inaudible). It's Andrew Kaplowitz,
6 Kaplo- -- like Kap (phonetic), low, witz (phonetic),
7 Kaplowitz, Kaplowitz. I've been here before. Some of
8 you-all might remember me. All right. But I actually
9 want to go back to what the first guy that speaks said.
10 He asked a question -- why are you here? And I know
11 you-all can't answer the question. But I have one
12 possible solution that I want to put out to everyone in
13 the audience.

14 These Commissioners are here because they're
15 required to be by law. Okay. Last fall there was a
16 package of bills that were passed. One of them required
17 the MPSC Commissioners to have four hearings a year that
18 are accessible to the public. That's why they're here.
19 Okay. That's a step up; it's a step up. So thank you
20 for being here. Thank you for listening. So what do
21 they do? They approve rate hikes.

22 But besides that, they now have a new job
23 responsibility. It's coming in from the same senate
24 bill that requires them to be there today, and that new
25 job responsibility is to take climate, equity, and

1 affordability into account. Never before -- never
2 before has the regulatory body that oversees appropriate
3 monopoly been able to take into account affordability.
4 So now that you have these cool, new rebelled up super
5 powers, do something.

6 (Off the record interruption).

7 JUDGE FAIRROW: (Inaudible). Caryl Conway, who
8 asked for an accommodation before the meeting.

9 (Off the record interruption).

10 MS. CONWAY: (Inaudible) -- rates which are not
11 affordable by people like me on a fixed income. You
12 know, I had a power outage, I'm diabetic, I lost my
13 insulin. My insurance would not pay for that out of
14 pocket. It cost me \$350. I live in a house by myself.
15 It's been rewired. I've had new -- a roof put on, all
16 types of things, and my bill is still enormous.

17 My last bill was \$488. I don't live in a
18 mansion. I cannot afford an increase. I do agree we
19 need the grid fixed, the infrastructure fixed. However,
20 I cannot -- and a lot of people are in the same position
21 that I am -- I cannot afford to have that increase put
22 on me. Thank you for your consideration, Commission.

23 JUDGE FAIRROW: Thank you. Unfortunately, that
24 is all the time we have for public comment this evening.
25 For those who are not able to make their comment this

1 evening, again, you can submit written comments through
2 the -- (inaudible) -- case number U-21534.

3 (Off the record interruption).

4 JUDGE FAIRROW: That will end this public --

5 (Proceeding concluded at 7:58 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Anna Burns, a Certified Electronic Recorder and Notary Public within and for the State of Michigan, do hereby certify:

That this transcript, consisting of eight-four (84) pages, is a complete, true, and correct record of the Michigan Public Service Commission Public Hearing on September 18, 2024.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage; and that I am not interested in the outcome of this matter, financial or otherwise.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 30th day of September, 2024.



Anna Burns, CER 9214

Notary Public, State of Michigan

County of Macomb

My commission expires: 2-28-2029